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ABSTRACT

In the San Jose/Evergreen Community College District, course and basic skills prerequisites have been established for all courses. Students with no record of completing these prerequisites cannot enroll unless they have been assessed by a counselor, have had their prerequisites verified in alternate ways, and have been granted override status for enrollment. In spring 1989, 11,307 overrides were granted based on completion of equivalent coursework, instructor evaluations, life experience, previous degrees, and other reasons. A study was conducted to compare the academic success of students who had completed all course and basic skills prerequisites with that of students who had enrolled on override status, and to determine whether experience and feedback had improved the counselors' ability to appropriately place students. Study findings included the following: (1) 69% of the students who had completed all course and basic skills requirements (N=35,676) received a grade of A, B, C, or Credit, compared to 64% of those who enrolled on override status; (2) 64% of the counselors successfully placed their students, compared with 59% of the counselors in spring 1989; (3) the greatest proportion of A and B grades was achieved by students with existing transcripts (58%), students with previous degrees (44%), and life exierience (41%); and (4) students who insisted on taking a course above their prerequisite level had one of the lowest success rates (49%) and the highest course withdrawal rate (33%). Study findings supported the conclusion that counselors who strictly enforce prerequisites, use a careful evaluation of relevant life experience, and rely on documented evidence of previous coursework can place students effectively. (VVC)

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COUNSELOR ASSESSMENT AND STUDENT SUCCESS FOR SPRING 1989

by

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JC 890 458

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Research Report #78

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ABSTRACT

Counselor Assessment and Student Success for Spring 1989

by Jon Alan Kangas, Ph.D.
San Jose/Evergreen Community College District (SJ/ECCD)
September 26, 1989

In 1985, all courses in the SJ/ECCD had course and basic skills prerequisites as appropriate. A computerized prerequisite checking system kept track of all students who met prerequisites and all override codes given by counselors.

The California Community College Matriculation Plan and Title 5 regulations state that multiple assessment measures are needed in the placement of students. Counselor assessment is considered an important part of this process. This research examines the questions: (1) Does counselor assessment relate to student success? and (2) Can feedback and experience increase counselor success rates?

The success rate of 69% for all students meeting both course and basic skills prerequisites (N = 24,369, excluding override codes) for Spring 1989 was tabulated, as was the success rate of 64% for students assessed by counselors (N = 11,307). Success was defined as receiving a grade of A, B, C, or CR.

Codes used included: PD = Previous degree; LX = Life experience; ET = Existing transcript; EC = Existing coursework; ES = Existing test score; IE = Instructor evaluation; OT = Old test score; SE = System error; SI = Student insistence; SO = Some other reason; SQ = Course to be taken in a sequence, and SW = Student word.

The results were as follows:

1. The most consistent predictor of course success over large numbers of students at 69% (N=35,676) was completion of course and basic skills prerequisites.

2. A most significant finding continues to be that counselor judgment, at its best, can relate to high success and that with feedback and experience, counselors can improve their success rates.

   The overall counselor success rate was 64%, up from 59% from Spring 1989.

   Nineteen (19) of 43 (44%) had a 60% or higher success rate, about the same as the 46% for Spring 1989.

   The computer success rate was up from 65% to 69%, making it more difficult for counselors to beat the computer. Eighteen percent (18%) beat the computer for Fall 1988 and 7% for Spring 1989. If the computer success rate had remained at 65% for Spring 1989, 16% of the counselors would have beat the computer. The percent of counselors below 50% was static at 5% for Fall 1988 and 7% for Spring 1989.

3. Codes indicating the use of existing college transcripts (75%), taking courses in proper sequence (72%), instructor evaluation (71%), and the use of previous degrees (64%) were the codes associated with high success.

4. A significant improvement in the student word (SW) override code resulted in a 61% success rate, up from 60% in Fall 1988 and 51% in Spring 1988.

5. When an SO (some other reason) code was used to substitute for a prerequisite, a 56% success rate resulted.

6. The greatest proportion of A and B grades was achieved by students with Existing Transcripts (ET) override codes, at 58%, students with Previous Degrees (PD) at 44% and Life Experience (LX), at 41%. Students meeting all prerequisites achieved 35% A's and B's.

7. For students who insisted on taking a course (SI) above their assessment/prerequisite level, less than a 50% success rate (49%) resulted. Only 24% received an A or B grade. SI students also had the highest withdrawal rates of all codes, at 33%.

Counselors who carefully follow prerequisites, use a careful evaluation of relevant life experience, and rely on documented evidence of previous coursework can achieve high levels of success for their students.

Inservice training by counselors who have high success rates for particular override codes will be used to help train other counselors. The hope is that focused feedback on counselor success by code will continue to result in improved student success. Further research will evaluate the results.

COUNSELOR ASSESSMENT AND STUDENT SUCCESS FOR SPRING 1989

by
Jon Alan Kangas, Ph.D.

I. Background

A. In 1985, the San Jose/Evergreen Community College District began its Computerized Prerequisite Checking System. All courses in the district were given course and basic skills prerequisites appropriate to the course. Students who did not have a record of those prerequisites in the district's computer could see a counselor and have their prerequisites verified or established in alternative ways. Counselors gave override codes for a particular course to explain the way in which the prerequisite had been met.

B. All California Community Colleges have begun a mandated matriculation process which includes assessment, orientations, counseling, and follow-up of students. We have been advised to use multiple means of assessment in making placement decisions rather than relying on a single test score. Counselor evaluation and judgment have been suggested as important additions to the process of assessing and placing students.

C. The current research has looked at the 11,307 override codes given at San Jose City College and Evergreen Valley College during Spring 1989, the code used, the counselor who used the code, and the success of the student in the course for which he/she was given the override code.

These success rates for counselors were compared to the success rates of all students district-wide who met prerequisites (N = 24,369, excluding students who received codes).

D. The goal of the project was to discern which override codes were associated with the highest and lowest success rates and to discover which counselors had strategies for the use of codes leading to the highest levels of student success. The counselors with high success rates will be asked to share their strategies during inservice training sessions with other counselors.

E. The definition of the override codes used was as follows:

EC Equivalent coursework completed within the District
EP Experimental purposes (research, etc.)
ER Discrepancy between computer/student (Error)
ES Existing test score, not in system
ET Equivalent work seen on transcript
IE Instructor evaluated student as eligible

LX	Life experience meets prerequisites, typically judged by faculty
OT	Other test, e.g., old Davis score or other test score that relates to our curriculum
PD	Previous degree
SE	System error. Student is OK/DP not OK
SI	Student insisted on taking a course above his/her assessment/prerequisite level
SM	Student OK. Course name was changed.
SO	Some other reason. Reason noted on Program Planning form
SQ	Sequence._ A technical code needed to allow a student to enroll in a course in the Summer and the following course in the Fall, e.g., English one level below 1A followed by English 1A. The SQ is given to the second class in the sequence.
SW	Student's word he/she meets prerequisite

II. Success by Override Code

A. Success for the purposes of this study was defined as a student's receiving a grade of A, B, C, or CR.

The success rate for all students in the district who met all their prerequisites (excluding those who were given override codes) was 69%, up from 65% for Fall 1988.

The success rate associated with the various override codes (N >10) averaged 64% and ranged from 49% for student insistence to 75% for students with existing transcripts.

The following table and graph indicate the number and percentage of students who succeeded for each kind of override code given. The flat line across the graph indicates the success rate of 69% for students who met all prerequisites district-wide (excluding counselor overrides).

TABLE 1

SUCCESS RATE BY CODE

	A'S		B'S		C'S		D'S		CR'S		F'S		W'S		I'S		NC'S		TOTAL		SUCC*	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
EC :	229	13%	309	18%	265	15%	79	5%	220	13%	87	5%	438	26%	16	1%	70	4%	1713	100%	1023	60%
EP :	5	15%	12	36%	5	15%	0	0%	5	15%	4	12%	2	6%	0	0%	0	0%	33	100%	27	82%
ER :	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
ES :	39	12%	33	10%	39	12%	19	6%	54	16%	19	6%	99	30%	7	2%	24	7%	333	100%	165	50%
ET :	1595	44%	494	14%	427	12%	120	3%	204	6%	99	3%	573	16%	36	1%	78	2%	3626	100%	2720	75%
IE :	467	12%	435	11%	301	8%	84	2%	1601	41%	95	2%	560	14%	24	1%	363	9%	3930	100%	2804	71%
LX :	129	23%	105	18%	72	13%	17	3%	37	6%	38	7%	155	27%	7	1%	11	2%	571	100%	343	60%
OT :	6	33%	3	17%	3	17%	0	0%	0	0%	2	11%	4	22%	0	0%	0	0%	18	100%	12	67%
PD :	98	27%	61	17%	33	9%	11	3%	37	10%	8	2%	99	28%	5	1%	5	1%	357	100%	229	64%
SE :	2	6%	5	15%	5	15%	1	3%	6	18%	3	9%	11	32%	0	0%	1	3%	34	100%	18	53%
SI :	113	11%	142	13%	163	15%	52	5%	101	10%	81	8%	350	33%	11	1%	44	4%	1057	100%	519	49%
SM :	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	1	100%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	1	100%	0	0%
SO :	699	16%	723	16%	601	13%	202	5%	490	11%	230	5%	1274	29%	58	1%	176	4%	4453	100%	2513	56%
SQ :	7	15%	8	17%	10	21%	4	9%	9	19%	2	4%	4	9%	0	0%	3	6%	47	100%	34	72%
SW :	291	20%	247	17%	215	15%	65	4%	147	10%	79	5%	382	26%	18	1%	33	2%	1477	100%	900	61%
TOTAL	3680	21%	2577	15%	2139	12%	654	4%	2911	16%	748	4%	3951	22%	182	1%	808	5%	17650	100%	11307	64%
DIST PRQ MT+	10566	20%	7939	15%	5999	11%	1771	3%	11172	21%	1831	3%	10740	20%	484	1%	2331	4%	52833	100%	35676	68%
DIST PRQ MT-	6886	20%	5362	15%	3860	11%	1117	3%	8261	23%	1083	3%	6789	19%	302	1%	1523	4%	35183	100%	24369	69%

*Succ = A + B + C + CR grades; the category of "no grades" was not included in the calculations

+Total of all students who met prerequisites district-wide. Includes all students who were given override codes by counselors.

-Total of all students who met prerequisites district-wide minus (-) those who had override codes.

GRAPH 1

% SUCCESS BY CODE
% SUCC
69% DIST
% SUCCESS
90
80
70
60
50
40
30
XP
XT
SQ
IE
OT
PD
SM
LX
EC
SO
SE
ES
SI
CODE USED

B. Comments

4 CODES BEAT THE COMPUTER

Success Rate	Code	Comment
82%	EP	This code is designed for experimental purposes. It was given in error 33 times.
75%	ET	Counselors are doing an excellent job of evaluating transcripts from other colleges to establish that students have met District prerequisites. This was up from 60% for Fall 1988.
72%	SQ	This code was used, with a 72% success rate, up from 68%, to allow a student to take two courses in sequence when the first is a prerequisite for the second, e.g., English one level below 1A in Summer and English 1A in the Fall. One would expect the success rate to approximate the computer's 69% success rate, which it did.
71%	IE	Success associated with instructor evaluation, typically in the ESL and English areas, was up from 61% for Fall 1988 to 71%.

5 CODES WERE AT 60% OR HIGHER

Success Rate	Code	Comment
67%	OT	Students with Old Davis Test scores did quite well this year.
64%	PD	64% (down from 69%) of students with previous degrees succeeded at their coursework.
61%	SW	Taking the "student's word" about whether they met prerequisites resulted in a 61% success rate (up from 60% for Fall 1988 and up from 51% in Spring 1988), indicating good judgment on the part of counselors.
60%	LX	The overall success rate of 60% for the Life Experience code was down from 69% for Fall of 1988. This assessment was often done by faculty in areas such as electronics, laser, computer technology, and math, as well as by faculty and

counselors in other areas. Previous work experience related to a given course seems to be a good predictor of success

60%	EC	60% (down from 63%) of students succeeded who had equivalent coursework to a prerequisite in the district. Used properly, this means the student met the prerequisite by coursework within the District. Sometimes the computer may not have recognized that an old course was equivalent to a new one. It also does not pick up repeats, which are handled with an override code.

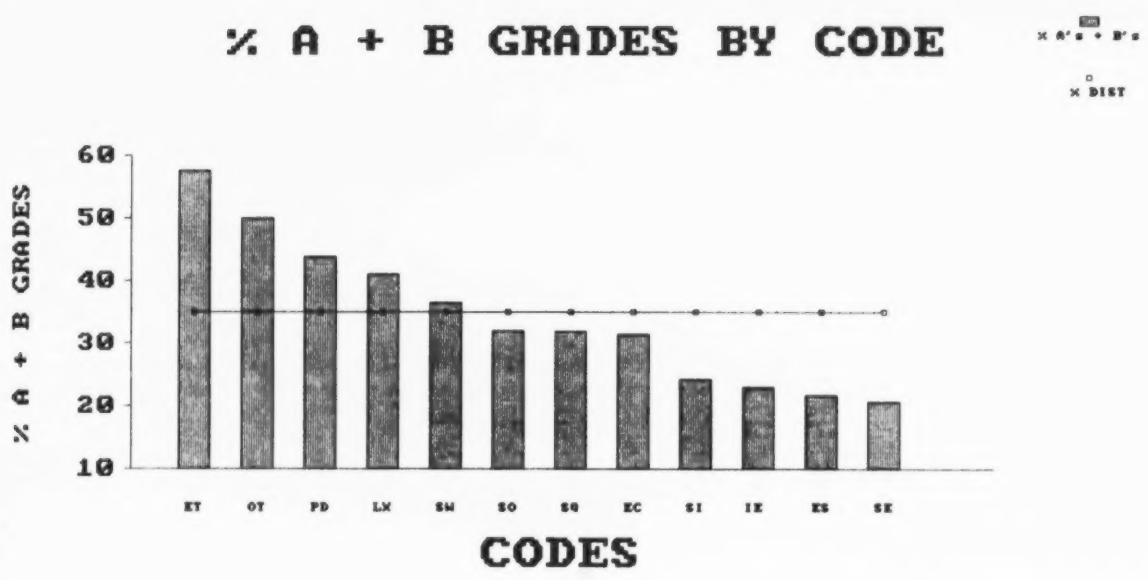
1 CODE WAS BELOW 50%

Success Rate	Code	Comment
49%	SI	Students insisting on taking courses above their prerequisite level had less than a 50% chance of succeeding.

III. A and B Grades by Override Code

A. Students who enter a course with an override code often want to be able to achieve top grades. The following graphs, using data from Table 1, indicate the percentage of A and B grades received for each override code, excluding EP. The flat line indicates that 35% of students who met all course and basic skills prerequisites had A or B grades.

GRAPH 2



B. Comments

ET, OT, PD, LX, and SW related to high proportions of A and B grades compared to the District total of 35%.

Students with previous college coursework who brought in transcripts had achieved 58% A's and B's. Students with old Davis test scores had 50%, students with previous degrees 44%, related life experience 41%, and student's word about previous work related to 36% A's and B's.

These students have generally had previous successful college experience.

SI, IE, ES, and SE are associated with low proportions of A's and B's.

Only 24% of SI students who insist on taking a course above their prerequisite level receive A's and B's.

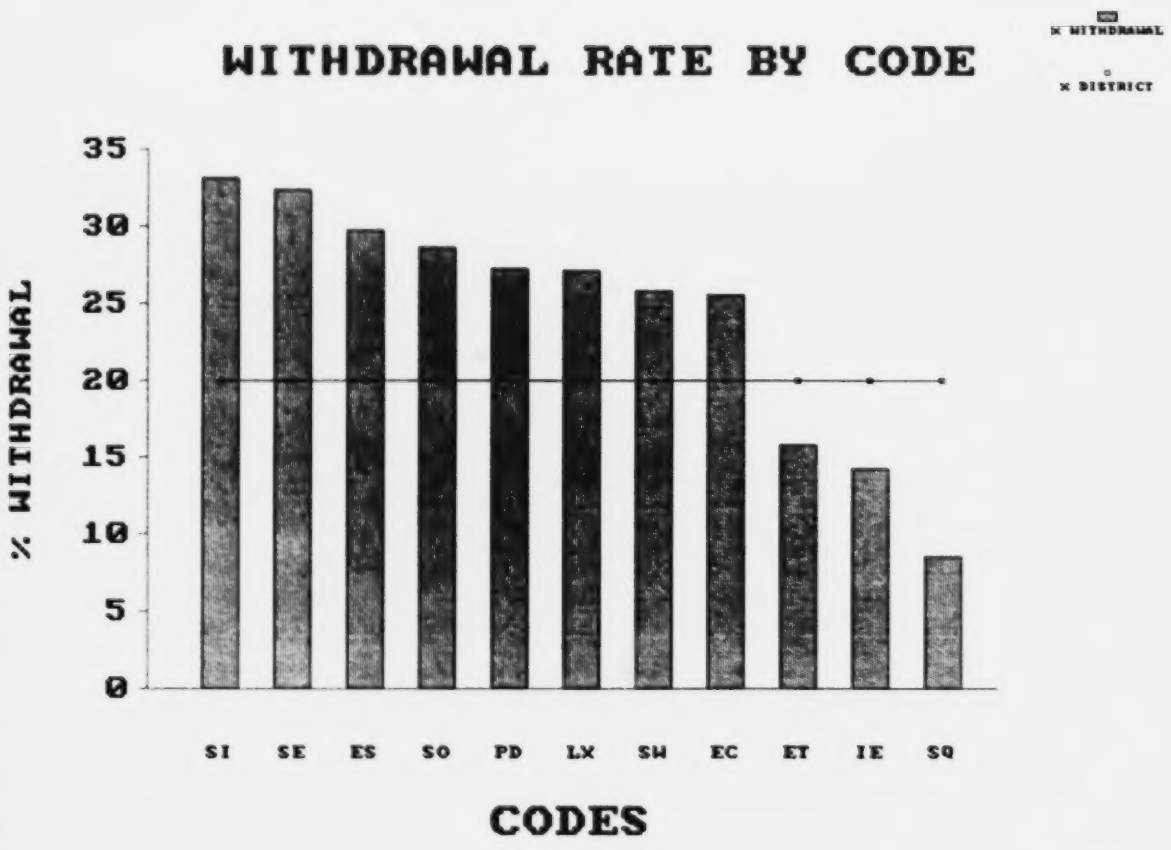
Of interest is the fact that while instructor evaluation (IE) results in placing students in classes with high success rates (75%), the number of A's and B's by these students is quite low, at 23%.

ES and SE codes are associated with existing test scores not yet downloaded into the computer and with system errors. These are codes associated with a certain amount of confusion and error and the meaning of the results are not clear at this time.

IV. Withdrawal Rate by Code

A. Some codes result in a much greater withdrawal rate than others.

GRAPH 3



B. Comments

Student Insistence (SI) was associated with the highest withdrawal rate, at 33%, compared to a 20% withdrawal rate for students who met all prerequisites.

Students with Existing Transcripts (ET), Instructor Evaluation (IE) and who took courses in Sequence (SQ) had the lowest withdrawal rates, at 16%, 14%, and 9%, respectively.

System Error (SE), Existing Test Score (ES), and Some Other Reason (SO) were associated with confusion and with borderline cases and had high withdrawal rates, at 32%, 30% and 29%, respectively.

V. Success Rates by Override Code and by Counselor

A. Table 2 indicates the percentage of students succeeding for each override code and for each counselor (C1 = Counselor #1 through C48 = Counselor #48).

Counselor

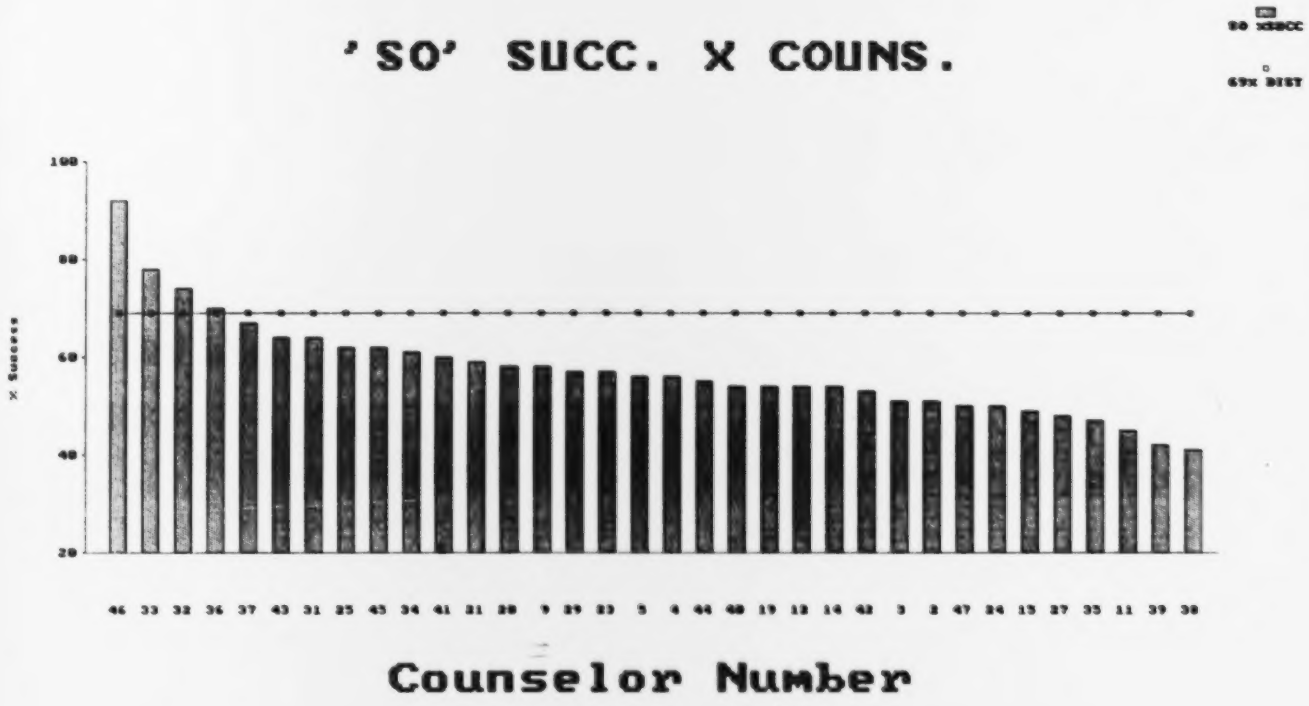
Code	C1	C2	C3	C4	C5	C6	C7	C8	C9	C10	C11	C12	C13	C14	C15	C16	C17	C18	C19	C20	C21	C22	C23	C24
EC :	0%	67%	63%	63%	66%	0%	25%	100%	50%	0%	50%	20%	83%	0%	60%	42%	66%	83%	33%	70%	0%	0%	71%	68%
EP :	0%	83%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
ER :	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
ES :	0%	53%	0%	0%	0%	80%	25%	71%	100%	0%	44%	0%	0%	42%	33%	50%	55%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	47%
ET :	100%	59%	75%	68%	52%	0%	67%	86%	63%	0%	77%	44%	50%	65%	76%	42%	64%	0%	63%	100%	68%	0%	100%	69%
IE :	100%	59%	41%	60%	51%	0%	27%	100%	53%	50%	63%	0%	54%	76%	71%	51%	50%	100%	65%	100%	66%	100%	58%	69%
LX :	0%	80%	44%	0%	87%	0%	0%	0%	33%	0%	73%	0%	0%	0%	67%	41%	0%	0%	55%	0%	100%	0%	0%	70%
OT :	0%	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
PD :	0%	58%	67%	0%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%	0%	100%	50%	50%	0%	58%	67%	0%	0%	75%	0%	50%	0%	0%	70%
SE :	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%	50%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	33%
SI :	0%	57%	50%	67%	51%	0%	0%	0%	50%	0%	46%	0%	0%	68%	33%	62%	60%	0%	0%	50%	40%	0%	0%	43%
SM :	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
SO :	38%	51%	51%	56%	56%	0%	78%	14%	58%	0%	45%	54%	67%	54%	49%	29%	88%	0%	54%	100%	59%	0%	57%	50%
SO :	0%	50%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
SW :	25%	77%	57%	54%	64%	100%	0%	66%	41%	0%	67%	0%	100%	71%	53%	42%	100%	0%	50%	43%	73%	0%	0%	64%
T	44%	61%	51%	59%	57%	50%	56%	66%	54%	50%	61%	45%	65%	65%	59%	46%	63%	90%	60%	63%	59%	100%	58%	65%

Counselor

Code	C25	C26	C27	C28	C29	C30	C31	C32	C33	C34	C35	C36	C37	C38	C39	C40	C41	C42	C43	C44	C45	C46	C47	C48
EC :	68%	0%	54%	46%	25%	0%	100%	100%	47%	46%	64%	0%	0%	66%	0%	50%	100%	66%	45%	0%	100%	0%	56%	65%
EP :	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%
ER :	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
ES :	69%	0%	83%	0%	100%	0%	0%	0%	47%	32%	38%	0%	0%	54%	0%	0%	0%	27%	25%	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%
ET :	80%	0%	61%	60%	57%	100%	60%	0%	64%	68%	68%	0%	100%	62%	67%	70%	40%	58%	53%	100%	58%	99%	84%	44%
IE :	66%	59%	63%	56%	59%	100%	100%	81%	59%	79%	65%	58%	84%	53%	100%	55%	38%	77%	100%	55%	82%	0%	52%	33%
LX :	100%	0%	53%	44%	69%	100%	0%	0%	46%	43%	55%	45%	86%	60%	0%	50%	75%	64%	33%	0%	0%	0%	75%	100%
OT :	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%	33%	0%	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%
PD :	100%	0%	71%	33%	0%	0%	0%	50%	71%	58%	63%	57%	0%	92%	0%	100%	100%	0%	0%	0%	67%	0%	61%	0%
SE :	0%	0%	60%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	40%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%	0%	100%	0%	0%	0%
SI :	53%	0%	53%	60%	52%	0%	32%	0%	48%	33%	26%	0%	100%	38%	80%	40%	25%	75%	67%	0%	67%	0%	56%	20%
SM :	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
SO :	62%	0%	48%	58%	57%	100%	64%	74%	78%	61%	47%	70%	67%	41%	42%	54%	60%	53%	64%	55%	62%	92%	50%	40%
SO :	0%	0%	86%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	50%	75%	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	82%	83%	0%	0%	0%	100%	0%
SW :	83%	0%	55%	40%	0%	0%	0%	0%	61%	58%	54%	100%	67%	57%	75%	81%	59%	46%	36%	0%	69%	0%	45%	65%
T	69%	59%	57%	57%	57%	67%	57%	81%	62%	68%	57%	65%	73%	56%	56%	57%	56%	62%	55%	57%	66%	99%	56%	54%

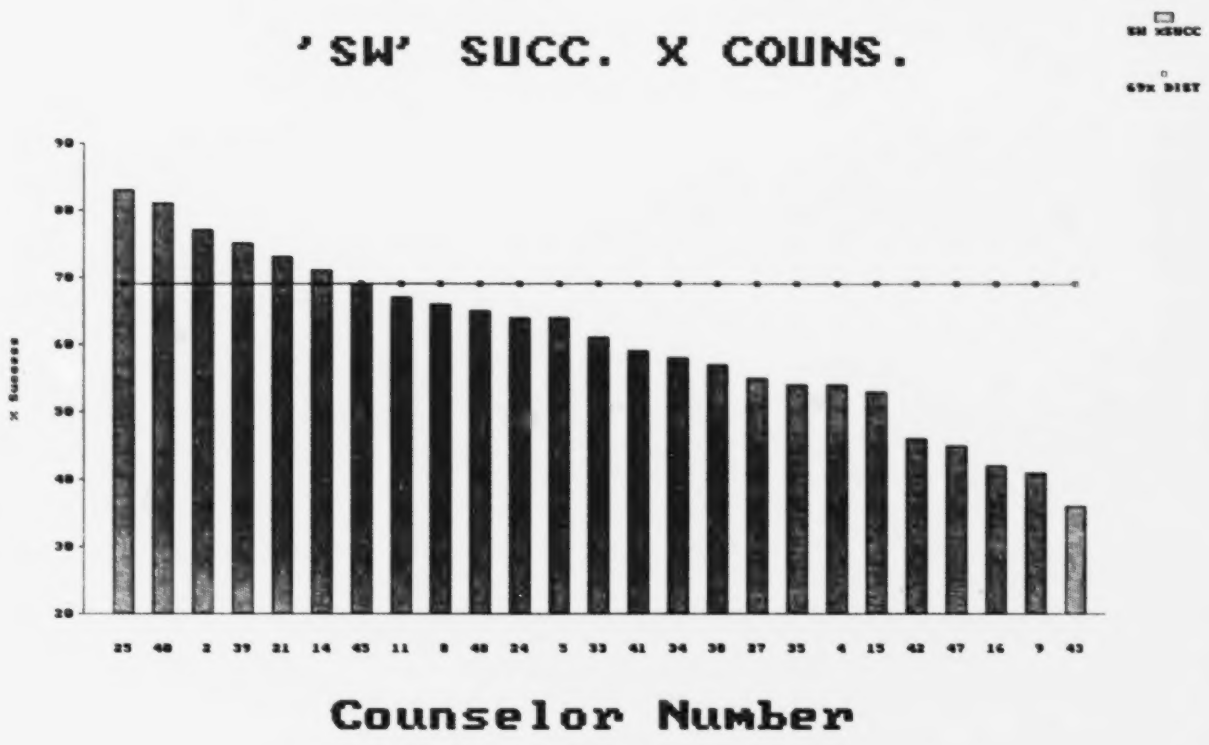
B. Graph 4 plots the success rates for students receiving 'SO' codes, broken down by counselor. Counselors who did not use the code more than 10 times were not included.

GRAPH 4



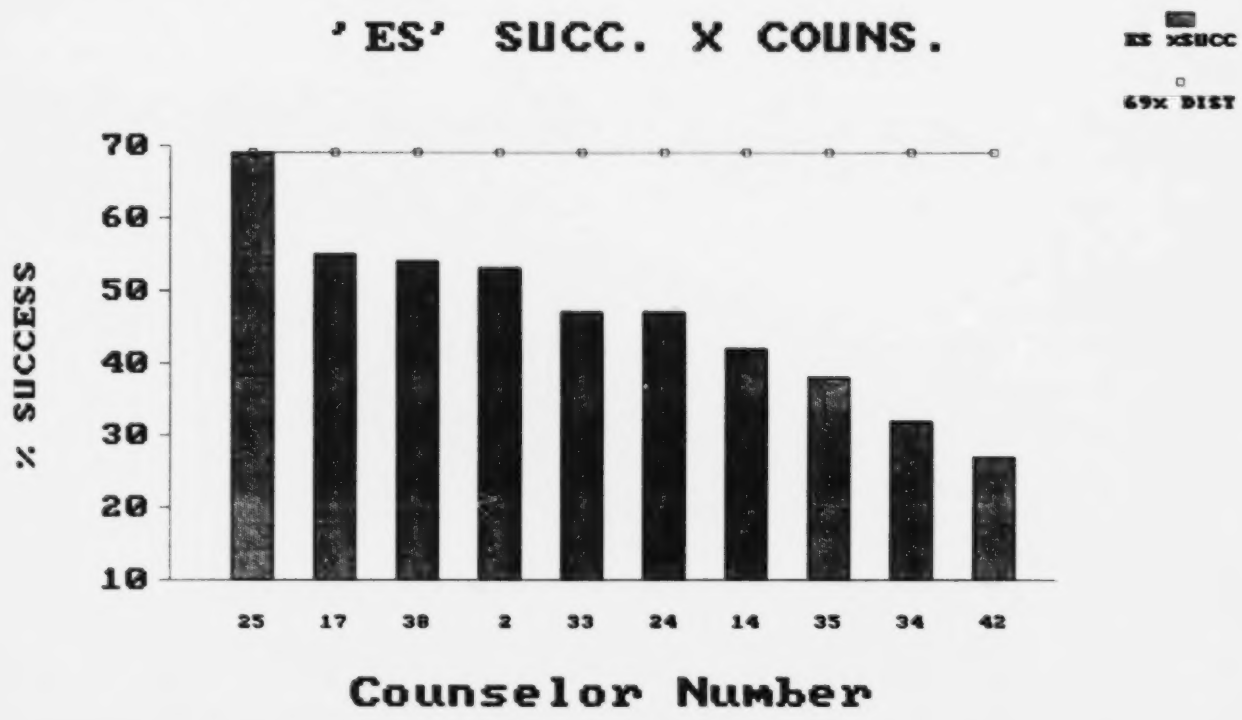
C. Graph 5 plots the success rates for students receiving 'SW' codes, broken down by counselor. Counselors who did not use the code more than 10 times were not included.

GRAPH 5



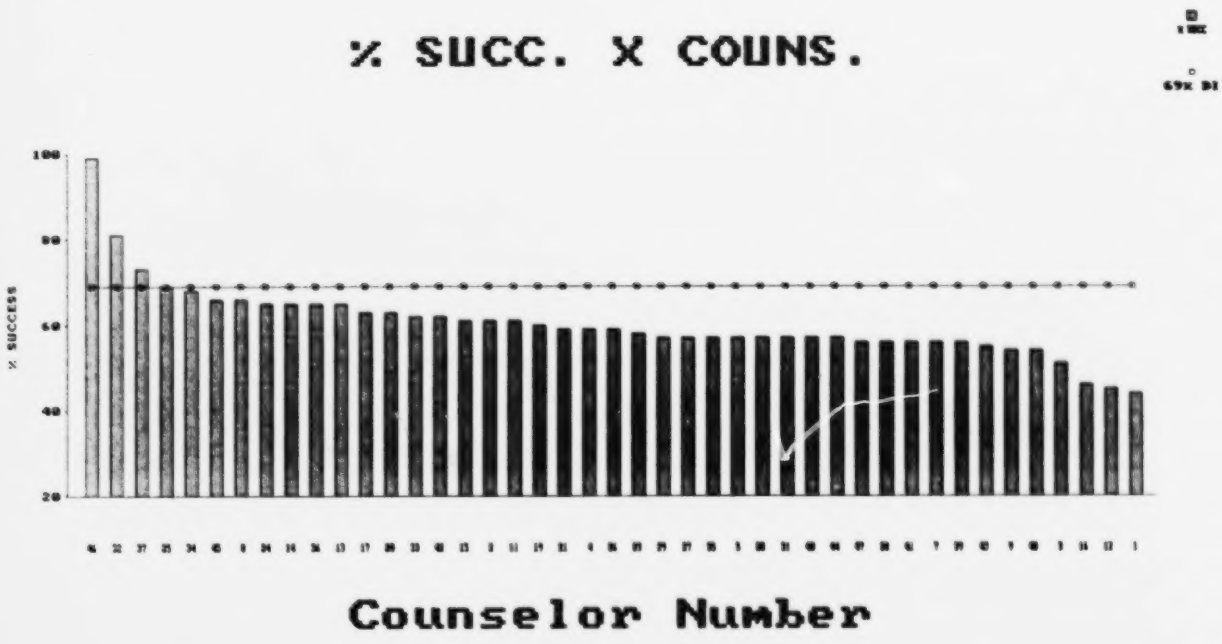
D. Graph 6 plots the success rates for students receiving 'ES' codes, broken down by counselor. Counselors who did not use the code more than 10 times were not included.

GRAPH 6



E. Graph 7 plots the <u>overall success</u> rates for students receiving override codes, broken down <u>by counselor</u>. Counselors who did not use codes more than 10 times were not included.

GRAPH 7



F. Comments

ES Code: The range of success for counselors using ES (an existing test score was seen that should allow the student to qualify for the course) was from 27% to 69%, down from 53% to 73% for Fall 1988.

---None of the counselors achieved a higher success rate than the 69% rate for students meeting all prerequisites.

---One of 10 counselors (10%) achieved a rate at or above 60%, lower than the 20% for Fall 1988.

---Six of 10 counselors (60%) achieved a rate below 50%.

The use of this code relies on a solid knowledge of prerequisites and a solid interpretation of test scores. It has historically had the greatest confusion of any code used and continues to be a problem area.

SO Code: The success for counselors using the SO code (the student meets a prerequisite for some other reason) ranged from 41% to 92%, up from the 24% to 82% associated with Fall 1988.

---Four of 34 counselors (12%) had higher success rates than the students who met all prerequisites (69%). This was down from the 18% for Fall 1988.

---Eleven of 34 counselors (32%) were at or above 60%, up from 27% for Fall 1988.

---Six of 34 counselors (18%) achieved a rate below 50%, doing less well than the 12% for Fall 1988. This code has a greater number of low success rates than most other codes.

It is clear that a careful examination of the reasons why a student may meet a prerequisite not included in the computer's information files or program can result in success rates higher than for students who meet all prerequisites for their courses.

SW code: The range of success for counselors using the SW code (student word that they had the equivalent of a prerequisite course elsewhere) was from 36% to 83%.

---Six counselors of 25 (24%) had success rates higher than the 69% rate of students who met prerequisites.

---Thirteen (13) of 25 counselors (52%) were at or above 60%, up from 47% for Fall 1988.

---Five of 25 counselors (20%) using more than ten SW codes had a success rate below 50%, more than the 7% for Fall 1988.

A student's word was not particularly a good predictor of success in Spring 1988. For Fall 1988, however, there was a much more thoughtful application of this code by counselors, increasing this success rate to an exceptional 60% overall. At 61% for Spring 1989, this code has been a surprisingly good one.

Overall Counselor Success Rates: The overall success rate of counselors who used more than 10 codes ranged from 44% to 99%. The collective success rate increased slightly, from 57% in Spring 1988 to 59% in Fall 1988 and to 64% in Spring 1989.

---For three of 43 counselors (7%), their overall success rate exceeded the 69% success rate of students who had met all prerequisites.

---Nineteen of 43 (44%) with more than ten codes were at or above 60% overall, similar to the 46% for Fall 1988.

---Three of 43 (7%) had an overall success rate below 50%. This rate was similar to Fall 1988 (5%).

---The 99% was associated with a very short term program in which all students received A grades.

SI code (a new code for Fall 1988): The range of success for counselors using the SI code was from 26% to 68%.

---No counselor using SI exceeded the 69% rate of students who met prerequisites.

---Four of 20 counselors (20%) had success rates at or above 60%.

---Nine of 20 counselors, or 45%, had success rates lower than 50%.

General Comments: Several codes and their success rates were singled out for review over time. It was gratifying and encouraging to note that the percentage of counselors with a success rate above 60% increased or remained stable for two codes as summarized below:

% of Counselors Above a 60% Success Rate

	SP88	F88	SP89
Overall	32%	46%	44%
SW	25%	47%	52%

Several codes needing improvement were represented in the percentage of counselors with success rates below 50% as summarized below:

% of Counselors Below a 50% Success Rate

	SP88	F88	SP89
Overall	15%	5%	7%
ES	43%	33%	60%
SO	33%	12%	18%
SW	50%	7%	20%

VI. Summary

How does counselor judgment as a means of assessment relate to student success? Counselors work with an infinite variety of information combinations, including test scores, previous college coursework in and outside of the district, previous degree status, high school grades, work experience, appearance, ability to articulate, vocabulary level, student's word about educational accomplishments, survey information, college grades, home situation, number of hours of work, personal support systems, perceived motivation, clarity of student goal, and so on. Every student brings a different configurations and combinations of the above kinds of information. Counselors are faced with the extraordinary task of taking each new combination of information, weighting the information, and making a unique judgment about the chances of success for each student. This judgment must then be combined with a discussion with the student to arrive at a decision about what to do. Student variables then get mixed with counselor judgment. This study looked at the success rate of this process in comparison to the success rate of all students in the district who met all course and basic skills prerequisites. Counselor judgment resulting in the use of override codes is often exercised in adverse circumstances, including off-campus sites, short appointment times, long lines, and inadequate information from the student.

Since this first report was done for Spring of 1988, counselors have had feedback on their performance on the use of codes. It was important to know whether or not feedback and experience could influence counselor success rates.

Documented completion of previous coursework or degrees (PD, EC and ET), along with life experience, in related work areas and instructor evaluations (LX and IE), continued to be the best ways of predicting success. When these variables were analyzed by counselors and faculty, their success rates were:

	SP88	F88	SP89
Existing Transcript	60%	60%	75%
Sequence	N/A	68%	72%
Instructor Evaluation	59%	61%	71%
Previous Degree	59%	69%	64%
Student's Word	51%	60%	61%
Life Experience	67%	69%	60%
Existing Coursework	60%	63%	60%

The most consistent overall predictor of success in courses, 69%, was completion of course and basic skills prerequisites within the District. Basic skills prerequisites in this study were met either by completion of basic skills courses or by an appropriate test score. Sixty-nine percent (69%) of these students were successful.

When unique combinations of information had to be combined to establish some other reason that a student met a prerequisite (and, therefore, should be allowed in a class), the success rate for all counselors was:

Some Other Reason 56%

A student insistence (SI) code was used for the first time in Fall 1988 for students who insisted on taking a course above their prerequisite level. This group had one of the lowest success rates at 49%.

SI students had the highest withdrawal rate of any group, at 33%.

The overall success of all counselors for all codes increased from 57% in Spring 1988 to 59% in Fall 1988 and to 64% in Spring 1989.

Again, counselor judgment is exercised along with student judgment and it is the result of this interchange that results in the override code given. It is evident that one cannot generalize about the effectiveness of counselor assessment. The judgment and counseling skills in relationship to students are exercised more effectively by some than others.

The complexity of the decision making dealing with an incredible range of variables in differing combinations for each student can never be encompassed effectively by a test or tests.

However, counselors who carefully follow prerequisites, use a careful evaluation of relevant life experience, and rely on documented evidence of previous coursework can achieve high levels of success at 60% or above.

All in all, there is great potential for the role of counselors in the assessment process and for feedback, coupled with practice, to increase success rates. There also appears to be the real possibility that with direct feedback to a counselor about his or her success rates, the counselor's success rate can be increased. It is hoped that continual monitoring will see this trend continue.

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